

Men Make Houses; Women Make Homes

The Human Interest In It

"The Story of a Very Little Person," appearing in the January issue of the Woman's Home Companion, and written by Albert White and Mary Fleaton Vorse, makes so strong an appeal on account of its "human interest" element that an extract is reproduced here for the benefit of women at large and of young mothers generally.

"The Very Little Person" is the first baby in the family, and the extract picks up the thread of her story when she was just three weeks old, and says:

"At the end of that time the nurse went away, the family was left alone, and there ensued Constance's terrible loneliness, that comes when the strong and capable are left alone. Up to that moment she only thought with a No responsibility had been born. And now, weak as she still was, Louise was in her impetrated and ignorant hands. John came home to find her crushed under her burden of responsibility. Her look frightened him; she seemed so frail and so tired, at the point of fatigue a man so dreads, when he realizes that it is only a step to tears. She lifted tragic eyes to him, she seemed to say, 'I can't do it, I am failing, and I can't wake her up and feed her both.' I can't do it, she protested.

"Here John rose to a height of daring of which he would not have believed himself capable. Without a second's hesitation, 'Give her to me,' said he boldly, and he took his daughter from his wife's arms. He patted her with what he hoped was a practiced air, just as he had seen the nurse do. He did it, however, with such a lack of skill that it occurred to him that the secret of fact he remembered that an older lad had told him in his youth that cats, when lifted, like to be supported with a hand held underneath, and he thought that this principle would work out with babies, and it did. And having awakened Louise, he handed her back, triumphant. Constance, diffusing an air of competence, as though he could help red any number of children at once, and the strong Constance, who had been so weak, was more like the Constance than she had, still, in this moment of desperation, he seemed a strong arm to lean on, and if he could solve the present difficulty so promptly, perhaps he could help with others. At any rate, she was comforted. Whether he knew much or little, he stood back of her. There were two of them to carry the burden of responsibility."

"It will be seen that John's success as a father led him to seem vainglorious, when he was not. He certainly put on airs about the baby, it was not long after this that he lured two old friends ostensibly to dinner. His invitation did not include a visit to Louise, and, of course, it was merely an accident that she should have been awake at the time when they were there. As a matter of fact, she was usually awake at that hour, but the mere didn't know this, or perhaps he did not care to know it. Men have a becoming shyness about babies, and these were bachelors.

"John had driven at that state of arrogance when he actually went over to the crib, and asking no one's permission, picked Louise up and displayed her to the two men, who were as embarrassed as a dog in the presence of a June bug. He laid her down again with an expert hand, and ostentatiously changed their subject to show that he was among those fathers who pushed their children down other people's throats, but he remained silent.

"This is my baby, and when you fellows can show me anything as interesting as this you will be of value to society.

"It was after they had gone that Constance came up and put her hands on John's shoulders, and said:

"After all, you know, it's my baby, too."

THE WEEK'S PRIZE.

The week's prize goes to Mrs. Ada C. Boice, Ashland, Va.

As answer has not yet been received to the last contest, the time limit is extended through this week.

One Happy Christmas.

Mrs. Boice, of Ashland, tells the story of a middle nineteenth century Christmas and the pleasures enjoyed by the little girls of that day. The allusions made by her to the social life of a former generation will be most interesting to women of the present year.

This is Mrs. Boice's story:

Each Christmas in my childhood was a happy one, but from the Christmas existing to the one to follow in twelve months was to me an interminable space of time, to be met with fortitude worthy of a Spartan. The happiness anticipated for weeks previous to that most endearing time was finally realized by too short commensurate with the rest of the year, and for several weeks—in fact, until the 22d of February—I was depressed. Then my natural elasticity of character reasserted its sway. I viewed the "diyers' parade" in the Capitol Square, admired the manoeuvres and uniforms, always wondering what they wore, then I saw another that was in place of under the chin, was delighted with the fireworks in the old armory, with Captain Dimmock in command—all this with a renewed sense that life still held some pleasant "happenings" before the next Christmas. Was there not a Fourth of July and my very own birthday anniversary in the same month as the Christ child's?

Then the dancing school and fortnightly cotillions, with the closing "fancy drills" and "fancy ball." That by the way, was in the day of Charles McEvoy. How many of my readers remember him?

Oh yes, life was pleasant, and I became reconciled to wait and partake of other joys in store. Yet nothing could or might equal that supremes of holidays, the "Christmases" as we all designated the interval between the 24th of December and the 2d day of January following. My own immediate relation to that time were unusually happy. An only daughter, with an only brother, we were the recipients of untold treasures.

Dear to my heart were the gifts of that day—books, trinkets, toys and fancy candles—and overjoyed was when the candles of purest wax bore the well-known name of Pizzini, a guarantee of quality. There was no desire of ours, Richmond always knew the due of children, as two large toy shops and several small ones on Broad Street were full; plentiful, desirable and in all probability highly priced; but the children did not know of prices in those days.

Other gifts there were, but the doll and her beautiful dress, the chair overtopped all for the time. I was very anxious to know how Santa did everything down so clean, at which my uncle informed me he supposed the pack he carried was dirtproof and oil proof; the chimney unusually large.

Daylight was creeping in, and the nurse came to dress us, catching me "Christmas gift" for the first time in my memory, so absorbed was I in my treasures. We always had an early breakfast Christmas, for we kept "open house," which usually began at 10. As we went down, I bearing the doll to show the other servants, they were so gazed by the sight of so many splendor that they almost forgot to catch "Christmas gift," but they rallied bravely, and Vick, the nurse observed, with a grin, "I done got 'nuther one to dress," at which I informed her I dressed my own doll.

MRS. ADA CLUTTER BOICE.

Ashland, Va.

Christmas Evergreens and Flowers.

The time draws near when Christmas cheer shall fill the world with joy;

When hearts beat high, forget to sigh,

Seek bliss without alloy.

Then come, to-day we'll hie away

To seek the wild wood's treasure—

Bright evergreen to grace each scene

Adds much to Christmas pleasure.

Jolly bandits now are we, despoiling

From the farmer's wife anything

From a pumpkin to a basket of apples,

A print of butter or a turkey will be highly appreciated.

Any home-made gift tied neatly with

a sprig of evergreen or accompanied

by a cheerful note will be most acceptable.

December 3, 1908.

Quality Improves.

Every day the quality of dress materials improves until now the broadcloths are not easily told from the satins, and the crepe de chine resembles velveteen, not a wonderful opportunity it is for the woman who loves soft, clinging fabrics. The present style of dress is clinging, but what will the next be? Now that the texture of materials has changed, should Dame Fashion inaugurate a new style, will we lose all these soft fabrics, or will the clothes of future years be all designed to suit the stuffs of the present?

By natural evolution the vogue of the moment should result in the hooped skirt. Can we have them made of satins and crepe?

It is true that history says that all of the fashions have been used before. But no age has ever seen such perfection of quality in dress goods. It will be interesting to see what the great creators of fashion will next revive. There must be many classic styles as yet unused from which they may draw inspiration. There are the garments worn on Olympia and the early fashions of the Chinese! They might even come back, and, perhaps, increase in number—the garments worn in darkest Africa!

C. S. CAMPBELL, D. P. A.

RICHMOND AND CHESAPEAKE BAY RAILROAD CO.—SCHEDULE OF EASTERN TRAINS AND FROM ASHLAND, STOPPING AT INTERMEDIATE STATIONS UPON SIGN.—Leaves Richmond (Broad and Laurel Sts.) 6:00 A. M.; 8:10 A. M.; 2:10 P. M.; 10:10 A. M.; 12:10 P. M.; 2:10 P. M.; 4:10 P. M.; 6:00 P. M.

***Except Sunday. **Sunday only.**

TO AND FROM WASHINGTON AND BEYOND.

Leaves Richmond 5:20 A. M. Byrd St. Sta. Arrive Richmond 7:30 A. M. 1:30 P. M. Arrive Elba Station 6:40 P. M. 10:40 A. M.

TO AND FROM WASHINGTON AND BIRMINGHAM.

Leaves Richmond 5:20 A. M. Byrd St. Sta. Arrive Birmingham 7:30 A. M. 1:30 P. M. 5:30 P. M.

TO AND FROM BIRMINGHAM AND NEW ORLEANS.

Leaves Richmond 5:20 A. M. Byrd St. Sta. Arrive New Orleans 7:30 A. M. 1:30 P. M. 5:30 P. M.

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